

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO, MILI, PINS

SUBJECT: POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

REFS (A) LISBON 6846 DTG 181321Z NOV 75

(B) LISBON 6871 DTG 191150Z NOV 75

(C) FBIS LONDON LD 182148Y DTG 182148Z NOV 75

SUMMARY: LISBON RADIO AND PRESS CARRIED UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT COPCON COMMANDER OTELO CARVALHO AGREED ON NOV 18 TO HIS REPLACEMENT AS LISBON MILITARY REGION COMMANDER BUT WOULD REMAIN AS COPCON COMMANDER. NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAS BEEN MADE. EFFORT TO REMOVE OTELO FROM POSITION OF POLITICAL-MILITARY AUTHORITY HAS NOW LINED UP AS POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN
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THE GROUP OF NINE AND OTELO'S LEFTIST AND COMMUNIST ALLIES.

FORMER REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER GEN. PINTO SOARES CONDEMNED NINE FOR REJECTING HIS EFFORTS TO RECONCILE THE NINE, FAR LEFT, AND GONCALVES ELEMENTS OF ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. OTELO OUT AS LISBON CHIEF?: COPCON SOURCE TOLD RADIO CLUBE PORTUGUES (RCP) LATE NOV 18 THAT COMMANDER OF COPCON AND LISBON MILITARY REGION (RML) OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO WILL REMAIN AS COPCON COMMANDER, BUT HAD AGREED TO HIS REPLACEMENT AS RML COMMANDER BY SOMEONE OF HIS "IDEOLOGICAL CONFIDENCE", OTELO MET WITH ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF COSTA GOMES, CHIEFS OF THREE SERVICES AND "GROUP OF NINE" MEMBERS MELO ANTUNES, VASCO LOURENCO, AND SOUSA E CASTRO. SAME COPCON SOURCE TOLD RCP THAT OTELO HAD REFUSED THREE ALTERNATIVES OFFERED HIM IN EFFORT TO REMOVE HIM AS HEAD OF COPCON: (1) REMOVE HIMSELF FROM REVOLUTIONARY STRUCTURE; (2) TAKE POWER HIMSELF; OR (3) ACCEPT POSITION AS ARMY VICE CHIEF OF STAFF. NO OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT HAS CONFIRMED REPORTED CHANGE IN RML COMMAND, BUT OTELO TOLD REPORTERS BEFORE ENTERING NOV 18 MEETING THAT "HE SAW CONSIDERABLE ADVANTAGE IN HIS REPLACEMENT AS RML COMMANDER BY OFFICER WITH CONFIDENCE OF OTELO AND OTHER MILITARY IN REGION". OTELO ALSO ADMITTED THAT STUDY WAS UNDERWAY ON WHETHER IT WOULD BE ADVANTAGEOUS FROM POLITICAL-MILITARY VIEWPOINT TO CONTINUE COPCON AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED OR TO ABSORB IT WITHIN ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF. COMMUNIST-LINING PRESS OF NOV 19 HEADLINED "OTELO RESISTED PRESSURES FOR HIS REMOVAL FROM COPCON", AND PRINTED PLEDGES OF SUPPORT FOR OTELO FROM A NUMBER OF MILITARY UNITS, INTERSINDICAL, COMMUNIST-DOMINATED UNIONS, AND COMMUNIST-FRONT ORGANIZATIONS. CPT DURAN CLEMENTE OF DEFUNCT ARMED FORCES J-5 (AGIT-PROP) ALSO WROTE ARTICLE ATTACKING REACTIONARY ASSAULT ON OTELO. DURAN CLEMENTE STATED THAT HE HAD OPPOSED OTELO AT TIMES IN THE PAST, BUT NOW SUPPORTED HIM STRONGLY.

2. PINTO SOARES ASSERTS "GROUP OF NINE" DERAILED UNITY ATTEMPT: IN NOV 19 INTERVIEW, MILITARY ACADEMY COMMANDANT AND FORMER REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER GEN. DUARTE PINT SOARES, A GONCALVES SYMPATHIZER, ALLEGED THAT HIS EFFORTS TO EFFECT A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THE GROUP OF NINE AND GONCALVIST AND FAR LEFT OFFICERS WERE DERAILED BY THE NINE. PINTO SOARES INDICATED HIS EFFORTS BEGAN AFTER NINE MEMBERS CPT. VASCO LOURENCO AND MAJ. MELO ANTUNES EXPRESSED "SERIOUS CONCERN" OVER RIGHT-WING CONFIDENTIAL

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ADVANCES. AT AN ALLEGED FIRST MEETING OF THE VARIOUS FACTIONS, DIVISIVE ISSUES WERE IDENTIFIED AND A SECOND MEETING PLANNED. NINE, HOWEVER, "INEXPLICABLY" FAILED TO APPEAR FOR SECOND MEETING, WHICH WAS ATTENDED, ACCORDING TO PINTO SOARES, BY THREE SERVICE CHIEFS OF STAFF, ADM ROSA COUTINHO, AND OTHER MAJOR LEFTIST AFM MEMBERS. "DIARIO" INTERVIEW COINCIDED WITH COMMUNIQUE FROM PINTO SOARES INDICATING THAT, DUE TO SHORTAGE OF MANPOWER AND LACK OF CLARITY REGARDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, THE

MILITARY ACADEMY WOULD CLOSE DOWN.

3. COUP REPORTS PROVOKE STRONG REACTION: NOV 18
REPORTS BY COMMUNIST-LINING "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" AND "O SEculo",
AND LEFTIST RADIO CLUBE PORTUGUES CHARGE THAT REACTIONARY
OFFICERS WOULD LAUNCH COUP NOV 19 PROVOKED SHARP REACTION FROM
NATIONAL MILITARY AND POLITICAL FIGURES (REF A)
PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES, ACTING IN HIS CAPACITY OF CHIEF OF
ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF DENOUNCED COUP CHARGES AS "ABSOLUTELY
FALSE" AND ANNOUNCED THAT LEGAL PROCEEDINGS WOULD BE INITIATED
AGAINST THE NEWSPAPERS WHO PRINTED THEM. NORTHERN MILITARY
REGION COMMANDER PIRES VELOSO, VASCO LOURENCO. CENTRAL REGION
COMMANDER CHARAIS, AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF MORAIS DE SILVA,
AND ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF CARLOS FABIAO ALSO REPUTIATED COUP
REPORTS. SOCIALIST LEADER MARIO SOARES ATTRIBUTED STORIES TO
"CONCERTED PLAN OF COMMUNIST INFORMATION CELL". MEANWHILE,
LISBON BOOKSTORE OWNED BY "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" WAS DAMAGED BY
BOMB NOV 18. NO INJURIES WERE REPORTED.

4. COUNCIL OF MINISTERS: MET EVENING OF NOV 18, AND CONCLUDED
WITH ANNOUNCEMENT THAT "ROUTINE" MEETING HAD TAKEN PLACE (REF B).
PPD SECRETARY GENERAL SA CARNEIRO, WHO MET WITH PRIME MINISTER
JUST BEFORE CABINET SESSION, CAME AWAY REASSURED ACCORDING
TO EMBASSY PPD CONTACTS.

5. WORKERS FORCE REPLACEMENT OF LISBON MUNICIPAL COUNCIL:
STRIKING MUNICIPALITY WORKERS, ACTING WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE
SOCIALISTS AND POPULAR DEMOCRATS, HAVE SUCCEEDED IN HAVING
LISBON'S INTERIM MUNICIPAL COUNCIL MEMBERS FIRED BY THE MINISTER
OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION. THE COUNCIL, DOMINATED BY
FELLOW-TRAVELING MDP/CDE ELEMENTS, HAS PROVEN INEFFECTIVE IN
DEALING WITH CITY ADMINISTRATION AND WORKERS GRIEVANCES. THE
COMMUNISTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS HAVE REACTED BY CALLING MASS
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MEETING OF MUNICIPAL WORKERS FOR NOV 19. WE EXPECT AN ATTEMPT
TO PURGE THE WORKERS WHO SUPPORTED THE STRIKE MOVEMENT.

6. COMMENT: EFFORT TO REMOVE OTELO FROM POSITION OF POLITICAL-
MILITARY AUTHORITY HAS NOW LINED UP AS POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN
GROUP OF NINE ON ONE SIDE AND OTELO, HIS FAR LEFT ALLIES, AND
HIS MORE RECENT COMMUNIST ALLIES ON THE OTHER. A SUCCESSFUL
MOVE AGAINST OTELO WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED IN
SMALL STAGES. PROPOSAL TO REMOVE OTELO FROM RML COMMAND, FOL-
LOWED BY CONTINUED REDUCTION IN COPCON'S ALREADY LIMITED AUTHORITY,
WOULD BE LOGICAL WAY FOR CHANGE TO TAKE PLACE. OTELO'S PROPOSAL
FOR HIS AND COPCON'S FUTURE ROLE DRAWS UPON ARMED FORCES
MOVEMENT (AFM) ASSEMBLY'S GUIDE DOCUMENT OF JULY 9 AND CAOOS FOR
AFM-PEOPLE ALLIANCE COORDINATED BY COPCON, (REF C). OTELO'S
PROPOSAL, WHICH COSTA GOMES SAID HE HAD RECEIVED A MONTH AGO,

WOULD RETURN ALL OPERATINAL AUTHORITY TO COPCON. OTELO,
EVER MORE OF A CAUSE CELEBRE ON THE POLITICAL-MILITARY SCENE,
HAS NOW BECOME THE FOCUS OF THE MASSIVE STRUGGLE BEING WAGED
BETWEEN THE DEMOCRATICALLY ORIENTED GROUPS AND THE COMMUNISTS
AND THEIR ALLIES.
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